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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

PASS TO TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA) AND
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO); DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR
S/ES-O, S/CT, EUR, DS, AND CA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURIN 2006 WINTER OLYMPICS: USG SITUATION REPORT
(SITREP) #8, 03/17/2006

REF: ROME 00827

1. (SBU) The following cable provides information on security, public diplomacy, and consular activities in Turin, Italy, for the 2006 Winter Olympic Games.

2. (SBU) The interagency Olympic Security Coordination (OSC) Office can be contacted on a 24-hour basis at the following numbers:

USG Joint Operations Center (JOC): 39-011-55-99-793/794/564
(tel); 011-39-011-55-99-590 (fax)

USG Threat Integration Center (TIC): 39-011-55-99-790/791
(tel); 011-39-011-55-99-590 (fax).

3. (SBU) Attached is a key for USG acronyms used within this cable: the inter-agency Olympic Security Coordination Office (OSC); the USG inter-agency Olympic Security Operations Center OSOC, including the 24/7 Joint Operations Center (JOC) and Threat Integration Center (TIC); the National Information Center for the Winter Olympics (CNIO), which is a Government of Italy (GOI) hosted multinational center; the Turin Olympics Organizing Committee (TOROC); the International Olympics Committee (IOC); the US Olympic Committee (USOC); European high-speed train project that is controversial in mountain towns near Olympics sites (TAV - Italian acronym); the Transportation Security Administration (TSA); Public Affairs/Public Diplomacy (PA/PD); Consular Affairs (CA); and the Italian Ministry of Interior (MOI).

KEY POINTS

4. (U) The Turin Paralympics continue to draw capacity crowds minimal but very positive press attention, and no disturbances. To illustrate the local enthusiasm, the Gold Medal match for wheelchair Curling is sold out (Italy is not/not playing). The US Sled Hockey Team's lost on March 16 to Norway 4-2, so is no longer eligible for the Gold. The U.S. will move to the bronze medal match on Saturday, March 18. The Closing Ceremonies of the 2006 Winter Paralympics is scheduled to take place Sunday, March 19. It will be held in the Piazza Castello, one of Turin's most prestigious historical and architectural areas. During the Olympics, Piazza Castello was the site of the medals ceremonies. The Presidential Delegation to the opening ceremonies of the Paralympics attended a concert in the Piazza to the largest recorded crowd ever in that piazza. Italian authorities and the Olympics Security Coordination office are focused on Olympic security throughout the weekend to ensure a successful end to the Paralympics. There were no requests for Consular services on March 16.

SECURITY ISSUES

5. (U) Terrorist Activity: No activity has been identified.

6. (SBU) Threats: There is no credible, specific information that terrorists intend to target the Paralympics. Italian law enforcement and security officials remain attentive to the possibility of attacks timed to affect the national elections scheduled for April 9; there is no specific information related to Turin.

7. (U) Demonstrations: The OSC is not aware of any scheduled protests or plans to disrupt the Paralympics. Italian authorities remain on heightened alert throughout Turin to ensure the safety of spectators, athletes, and VIPs attending the Games. Elsewhere in Italy there are demonstrations planned for March 17-19: against the war in Iraq (in Rome); anarchist demonstrations are planned in Milan. On March 16, a pro-merchant demonstration in Milan

as a protest against violence the previous weekend was held without incident.

8.(U) The USG interagency OSC, JOC, and TIC operates seven days a week from 0800 to 1700 hours. The hours of operation are extended for night events.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

9.(U) March 17 edition of Turin-based national newspaper La Stampa carried an article entitled, "The Big Heart of Turin," with the subheading, "Paralympics Record Success." The article notes the strong public response to the Paralympic Games, the strong ticket sales, and the 20,000 volunteers during both the Olympics and Paralympics. The article states all this disproves the stereotype of Turin as having gray architecture and people who are "cold, detached, and introverted." As an example, the correspondent points to the March 16 sled hockey game between Italy and the UK. He notes that in prior sled hockey games, Italy had not scored any goals, while its opponents scored 24 points. Nevertheless, Italian fans have remained upbeat and supportive of their team. When the Italian team scored a goal (its first) in yesterday's game, the stadium "completely erupted." The article ends with the correspondent paraphrasing the Olympic theme, "Passion certainly lives in Turin."

10. (U) As a follow-up to previous articles on ways to strengthen the Paralympic training program in Italy, and use the Turin Games as a "shot in the arm," La Stampa carried an article March 17, that discussed collaboration between the President of the Italian Paralympic Committee Luca Pancalli, and Gianni Petrucci, President of the Olympic Committee. Both men are looking at reforming Italian legislation to provide more government support to Paralympic athletes. They are also talking with the Australians whom they believe have a good model of public-private support for Paralympic athletes in Australia. The article also reported on an impending "agreement with the Italian military corps to provide support to the Italian Paralympic program" PA will provide information to the Italian Paralympic Committee about U.S. efforts at building grass roots support, including the Paralympic Academy and organizations represented by members of the Presidential Delegation to the Paralympics.

11. (U) The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is currently screening worldwide coverage of all sports of the Paralympic Winter Games on the internet television channel, www.paralympicsport.tv. To-date, over 23,000 viewers from more than 90 countries have tuned in online to watch live and delayed coverage of the 2006 Winter Paralympic Games. The top five viewing countries are the US, Italy, Canada, Germany, and Japan."

12. (U) US Facts from the Paralympics

A. Sled hockey player Timothy Jones (Mt. Ephraim, NJ) is the first African-American on the US team and Ralph Green (Vail, Colorado/Brooklyn, NY) is the first African-American male to make the US Paralympic Alpine Ski Team. Ralph Green was interviewed by NBC Today show from Turin prior to the opening of the Paralympics, through facilitation by PA, as was two-time Gold Medalist in downhill skiing Laurie Stephens.

B. There are four US athletes who were born abroad. They are Nordic Skier Chris Klebl (Germany), wheelchair curler Gustavo Perez (Spain), sled hockey player Alexi Salamone (Ukraine) and alpine skier Elitsa Storey (Bulgaria).

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

13. (U) Consular Section Turin had no action for Thursday, March 16.

14. (U) The Consular Office for the duration of the

Paralympics is co-located with in the same building as the OSC and Olympics Coordination Office in Turin. Four staff members and one consular officer comprise the Consular Section. The office is open from 0900 to 1800 hours. The office provides emergency services for US citizens and has established an extensive network of contacts with hotels, hospitals, and local law enforcement officials. Contact information: Telephone number: 011-5599-330. FAX: 011-5599-551. Additional information may be found at [HTTP://Milan.USConsulate.Gov](http://Milan.USConsulate.Gov).

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